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ABSTRACT

In this article, characteristics of Japanese causative constructions are reviewed and discussed based on an article by Masayoshi Shibatani (1976), who has worked extensively with the Japanese causative. First, the nature and definitions of the causative are discussed. Then, the types of Japanese causative are presented; finally, a categorization of verbs according to their causativity is suggested. The article concludes by underscoring the value of the notion of causativity and a categorization of verbs. (Contains 10 references.) (Author)

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ON JAPANESE CAUSATIVE:
Review of Shibatani's Notion of Causative

Misaki Shimada

Abstract: In this article, characteristics of Japanese causative constructions are reviewed and discussed based on an article by Masayoshi Shibatani (1976), who has worked extensively in Japanese causative. First, the nature and definitions of the causative are discussed. Then, the types of Japanese causative are presented; finally, a categorization of verbs according to their causativity is suggested. The article concludes by underscoring the value of the notion of causativity and a categorization of verbs.

Masayoshi Shibatani (1976) has examined Japanese verbs using causation as a tool for classifying them. He categorizes verbs into two groups, namely causative verbs and noncausative verbs, and further subdivides the causative verbs into several smaller groups.

Shibatani states that a sentence is defined as causative when the following two conditions are met (1976:230-240). One is that 'the relationship between two events is such that the speaker believes the occurrence of one event, the 'caused event' has been realized at t_2, which is after t_1, the time of the causing event.' The second condition is that:

> "the relation between the causing and the caused event is such that the speaker believes the occurrence of the caused event is wholly dependent on the occurrence of the causing event; the dependency of the two events must be to the extent that it allows the speaker to entertain a counterfactual inference that the caused event would not have taken place at that particular time if the causing event had not taken place, provided that all else had remained same."

According to this definition, verbs such as tatu (stand), agaru (go up), aku (open) are noncausative (see 1a,c), while verbs such as tateru, ageru, akeru, are causative (1b,d).

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(1) a. Kodomo ga tatta.
The child stood up.
b. Kodomo o nikai ni ageta.
I sent the child upstairs.
c. Doa ga aita.
The door opened.
d. Doa o aketa.
I opened the door. (I caused the door to open.)

In traditional grammar, we call the first group intransitive, and the second group transitive. Here arises a question of how these two notions, causation and transitivity, are related. Let us examine this question below.

(2) a. Zyon o korosita.
I killed John.
b. Zyon ga sinda.
John died.
c. Piza o tabeta.
I ate pizza.

It is clear that sentence (2a) is a causative sentence, i.e., "I caused John to die", and sentence (2b) is not. Then, how about (2c)? One could argue that it may be causative because the speaker 'decided to eat (first event)' and then the pizza was consumed (second event), and the second event is solely dependent upon the first event. However, it is not a causative sentence in the usual sense. Therefore, we need to show that verbs korosu and taberu have different qualities.

The first difference between the two is the fact that the agent's action is on the pizza in sentence (2c), and pizza is an inanimate object. On the other hand, the agent's action is on John, an animate object, in sentence (2a). Let us examine more examples.

(3) a. Hanabi o sora ni ageta.
I sentt up a firework into the sky.
b. Kodomo o nikai ni ageta.
I sent the child upstairs.
c. Taroo (no e) o kami ni kaita.
I drew (a picture of) Taro.
d. Taroo o okosita.
I woke Taro up.
e. Haha ni tegami o kaita.
I wrote a letter to my mother.

An observation here is that when the direct object is animate, the verb is always causative (3b,d). Sentence (3c) is not causative the despite the fact that it has an animate object. What is happening here is that an inanimate object e (picture) is understood. When the direct object is inanimate some sentences are causative (3a), and others are non-causative (3c,e). Therefore, we can conclude that there are at least three kinds of transitive verbs. One is those verbs that take an animate direct object (causative verbs), the second is those that takes an inanimate direct object and are still causative, and the last is those that take an inanimate direct object and are non-causative.

Another observation made by Shibatani is that the verb korosu has an intransitive counterpart sinu, whereas taberu does not. Shibatani defines verbs with a noncausative lexical counterpart as 'lexical causative' and those without an intransitive lexical counterpart as 'productive causative.' Since a verb such as taberu does not have a lexical intransitive counterpart, and only way to make the verb causative is to add the ending -saseru, it is considered a productive causative verb. Here we can define lexical causative verbs as a subgroup of transitive verbs since all lexical causative verbs indicate that the agent is acting on something.

We now focus on the differences between two types of causative verbs. Shibatani states that productive causative involves an embedded sentence in the deep structure, and lexical causative does not, and, therefore, some ambiguity occurs in productive causative sentences and no ambiguity results in lexical causative sentences. He uses several tests to prove to be the case. For example,

(4) a. Tanaka wa Taroo o kyuu ni tomaraseta.
Tanaka made (let) Taro stop suddenly.
Or, Tanaka suddenly made (let) Taro stop.
b. Tanaka wa Taroo o kyuu ni tometa.
Tanaka made Taro stop suddenly.
c. Tanaka wa Taroo ni kagami ni ututta zibun o misaseta.
Tanaka made (let) Taro see self in the mirror.
Or, Tanaka made (let) Taro see self in the mirror.
d. Tanaka wa Taroo ni kagami ni ututta zibun

o miseta.
Tanaka made Taro see self in the mirror.

Sentences (4a) and (4c) are both productive causative and ambiguous. For sentence (4a), kyuu ni can modify the action of either the causee or causer, and for sentence (4c), the reflexive pronoun zibun can be co-referential either with Tanaka or Taro. On the other hand, sentences (4b) and (4d) are both lexical causative and they are not ambiguous. Kyuu ni in (4b) clearly modifies the action of the causer, and zibun in (4d) refers only to Tanaka.

Shibatani also discusses the semantic differences of the two causatives (1976:251-273). One of the claims he makes is that which causative the speaker chooses depends on what the causer's true intrest is. If the causer's interest lies beyond the caused event, Shibatani believes the speaker uses the lexical causative, but if the causer's interest is the caused event itself, he believes that the speaker uses the productive causative.

(5) a. Tanaka wa kodomo o gakkoo no mae de orosita.
Tanaka dropped the child off in front of a school.
b. Tanaka wa kodomo o gakkoo no mae de orisaseta.
Tanaka made the child get off in front of a school.
c. Tanaka wa kodomo o ginkoo no mae de orosita.
Tanaka dropped the child off in front of a bank.
d. Tanaka wa kodomo o ginkoo no mae de orisaseta.
Tanaka made the child get off in front of a bank.

Shibatani claims the speaker used the lexical causative in sentence (5a) because the purpose of the caused event, i.e., dropping the child off in front of the school, was more than the caused event itself. It probably was to take the child to the school. On the other hand, the speaker used the productive causative in sentence (5b) because the caused event itself was the purpose of the utterance. It might have been because of a flat tire or mechanical failure.

Shibatani states that we must have a conventional purpose associated with the caused event in order to explain a sentence such as (5a). However, without conventionl purpose, we can use sentences (5c) and (5d). We have no specific inference about what the purpose is beyond the caused event, i.e., dropping the child off in front of a bank.

Although Shibatani does not mention it, one further interesting observation can be made about lexical causative verbs. Some causative-noncausative pairs behave somewhat differently from others. For example,

(6) a. Kodomo ga tatta.
The child stood up.
b. Kodomo o tataseta.
I made the child stand up.
c. Ie o tateta.
I built the house.
d. Ie o tatesaseta.
I made (someone) build the house.

Here we find a pair of intransitive and transitive verbs (6a,c) and their respective causative expressions (6b,d). However, in (7) one of the alternatives does not exist. For example, although the verb form in sentence (7b) looks morphologically correct, it is not acceptable.

(7) a. Doa ga aita.
The door opened.
b. *Doa o akaseta.
c. Doa o aketa.
I opened the door.
d. Doa o akesaseta.
I made (someone) open the door.

Examples in (8) further show this gap.

(8) a. Taroo ga okita.
Taro woke up.
b. ??Taroo o okisaseta.
??I had Taro wake up.
c. Taroo o okosita.
I woke Taro up.
d. Taroo o okosaseta.
I had (someone) wake Taro up.

Some lexical causative verbs belong to the same category as (6), e.g., agaru/ageru (lift), sinu/korosu (die), etc., and some belong to the type (7), e.g., yakeru/yaku (burn), nagareru/nagasu (float), simaru/simeru (shut), etc.

Reasons why these verbs behave differently seem to play an important role in determining the categories of the verbs. One observation is the animate/inanimate distinction. If the causee of the intransitive verb's causative (7b) is inanimate, the sentence will be unacceptable, and if the causee of the causative is animate (8b), the sentence will be questionable.

This is made even clearer when the -te ageru ending is added. The expression -te ageru means that the subject will perform a favor for the object which in this case is the causee. We cannot give any favor to an inanimate object. I have mentioned that agaru/ageru pair belongs to the same group as in (6), in which all four series are acceptable. However, depending on the status of the causee, acceptability changes.

(9) a. Kodomo o nikai ni agarasete ageta.
I did a favor of sending the child upstairs.
b. *Hanabi o sora ni agarasete ageta.
I did a favor of sending the firework into the sky.

(10) a. *Raito o kiesasete ageru.
I will do a favor of turning the light off.
b. Taroo kun, kimi o kiesasete ageru.
Taro, I will do you a favor of making (you) invisible. (assuming the speaker has some kind of magical power and Taro always wanted to be invisible)

An observation here is that when the causee of the causative of an intransitive verb is an animate noun, the sentence is acceptable, but when it is inanimate, it is not acceptable. However, for the verb okiru/okosu/?okisaseru/okosaseru series, a questionable consequence results. Sentence (8b) is highly questionable even though the object or causee of the sentence is Taro, who is, of course, animate. However, okisaseru can be acceptable in the following situation.

(11) Taroo wa saiminzyutu ni kakatta mama nemurituzukete ita node watasi ga okisasete ageta.
Since Taro has been hyponized and kept sleeping, I did Taro a favor of waking (him) up.

What we observe here is that the causer of the event has to have some power or authority over the causee or the caused event, and the causee must be willing to see the caused event to happen. This leads me to believe that this construction can be used as the permissive causative rather than the regular causative, somewhat similar to English sentence 'I let you...'

Let us now examine the relationship between the permissive causative and the regular causative.

(12) a. Taroo o gakkoo e ikaseta.
I made Taro go to school. Or,
I let Taro go to school.
b. Taroo ni piza o tabesaseta.
I made Taro eat the pizza. Or,
I let Taro eat pizza.

Both sentences in (12) are ambiguous since they can be interpreted in two ways: 1) 'I' forced Taro to engage in an action even though he was not willing to do so, or 2) 'I' gave Taro permission to do the action since he wanted to do so. Now we examine the lexical causative verb series.

(13) a. Taroo ga tatta.
Taro stood up.
b. Taroo o tataseta.
I made Taro stand up, or I let Taro stand up.
c. Ie o tateta.
I built a house.
d. Ie o Taroo ni tatesaseta.
I made Taro to build a house. Or,
I let Taro build a house.

Two interpretations are possible for both causatives created by adding -(sa)seru (13b,d), but only one interpretation is available for (13c). Thus, we can conclude that any productive causatives (i.e., non-lexical causatives) can work as the permissive causative or the regular causative depending upon the

context.

When -te ageru is added to those ambiguous sentences above, an interesting consequence results. (See 14)

(14) a. Taroo o gakkoo ni ikasete ageta.
I did (Taro) a favor by letting him go to school.
b. Taroo ni piza o tabesasete ageta.
I did (Taro) a favor by letting him eat the pizza.
c. Taroo o tatasete ageta.
I did (Taro) a favor by letting him stand up.
d. Ie o Taroo ni tatesasete ageta.
I did (Taro) a favor by letting him build a house.

By adding -te ageru to the ambiguous sentences, the ambiguity is resolved and only the permissive causative becomes possible. In (15a), the context shows that the verb is the regular causative; see what happens when we add -te ageru to it:

(15) a. Taroo wa sarada wa tabetaku nai to itta ga, watasi wa Taro ni sarada o tabesaseta.
Taro said he didn't want to eat salad, but I made him eat it.
b. *Taroo wa sarada wa tabetaku nai to itta ga, watasi wa Taro ni sarada o tabesasete ageta.
*Taro said he didn't want to eat salad, but I did Taro a favor by making him eat it.

In (15b), since the context tells that Taro is not willing to eat salad, a conflict results when we add -te ageru. Hence, we may use -te ageru as a test to determine if a sentence is regular causative or not.

Shibatani also discusses the difference between direct and indirect causatives (1976:267-269). In direct causation, the causer orally, physically, or manipulatively forces the causee to do something. In indirect causation, however, the causer does not directly cause the event to occur. For example, all the sentences we have discussed so far involve some

sort of physical movement on the part of the causee. The indirect causative, however, deals mainly with causee's mental state.

(16) a. Taroo wa Hanako o yorokobaseta.
Taro made Hanako happy (by doing something or saying something).
b. Taroo wa hanako o kanasimaseta.
Taro made Hanako sad (by doing something or saying something).

In both sentences in (16), Taro caused the change in Hanako's mental state, and Taro did not do anything directly; rather he did something which in turn made Hanako's mental state change. Thus, in the indirect causative, the causer causes the causee's mental state to change indirectly by doing or saying something else, whereas the direct causative involves some sort of physical movement on the causee whichthe causer initiates by doing something directly to the causee.

As we have seen, Shibatani presents a number of interesting points about Japanese verb classification. First, he divides all verbs into two categories, causatives and noncausatives, and we have found that all causative verbs are transitive, and, in fact, causative verbs are a subgroup of the transitive verbs. All transitive verbs that take an animate direct object are causative, and some other verbs that take an inanimate direct object can be causative. We have also learned that within the causative sentences, there are two different types, namely the 'lexical causative' which has a noncausative lexical counterpart and the 'productive causative' which does not have a lexical counterpart in noncausative. In the latter case, we must create the causative counterpart morphologically by adding the -saseru ending. These productive verbs are ambiguous since they can be interpreted as the regular causative or the permissive causative, and this is made clear by adding the -te ageru ending. We have also found that the causative form of the intransitive could only be acceptable when the causee is an animate object, and the causer has some sort of authority or power over the caused event. Shibatani divides the causatives further into two different types, direct and indirect. He discusses two different types of the caused event, physical change or mental change. When we examine verbs in the indirect causative construction, we find that they express some sort of

mental or emotional state; thus we can call these 'verbs of emotion.'

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